



## **Back to school for the Rainy River District School Board**

(September 7, 2004) - Rainy River District School Board staff was occupied throughout this past summer with preparations for students beginning the school year on August 31 at Atikokan High School and September 1 at all other district schools.

The Board held its sixth annual summer institute on August 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at Fort Frances High School. Forty-five teachers from the surrounding district attended this year's institute, *A Tapestry for Learning – Weaving Literacy with the Arts*. During day one, teachers participated in a number of active learning workshops for kindergarten, primary, junior and intermediate divisions. Day two focused on the arts.

The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Summer Program offered two, two-day courses at Fort Frances High School for Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers of both the Rainy River District School Board and the Northwest Catholic District School Board. The Numeracy Summer Program was held August 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and was attended by 13 teachers. The focus was on Number Sense and Numeration and teachers were presented with the big ideas of number sense and numeration, counting and communication, quantity, problem solving, the use of manipulatives assessment and creating a numeracy learning environment. The Literacy Summer Program was held on August 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and was attended by 18 teachers. The program centered on Reading and how children learn to read. Teachers learned about instructional strategies that work.

Elementary curriculum priorities continue to include Early Reading and Early Math. Teachers will be supported as they implement the Early Reading Strategy in schools. Assessment and writing training will also be done at the provincial and local levels as part of the Early Reading Strategy. Writing will be a focus at all grade levels. Later Literacy for students in Grades 6 to 9 will be a major part of this year's literacy plan. There will be focus groups in Grades 2 and 5, and Grades 3 and 6. Teachers in these grades will receive up to three sessions of intensive training in literacy and numeracy. The Board will continue to provide leadership for northwestern Ontario on new initiatives for Literacy and Numeracy.

Maintenance completed roof repairs at North Star, Atikokan High, Sturgeon Creek and Rainy River High. Handicap accessibility projects included washroom upgrades at Donald Young and Riverview, and ramp installation at Riverview Rainy River High and Sturgeon Creek. Flooring was replaced at North Star, Nestor Falls, Donald Young, Riverview and Robert Moore.

Staff and students were thrilled with J.W. Walker School's 28,644 square foot renovation and addition. "This 14 classroom school, with its vibrant colour scheme, full size gymnasium and fully-automated learning resource centre will provide a learning environment for our students that we can all be very proud of," said Raymond Roy, Manager – Plant Operations. Each classroom is equipped with overhead projectors and audio/visual equipment that gives teachers the capacity to integrate computer presentations into their lessons. The computer lab is fully equipped to ensure that this is one of the most technologically advanced schools in the province.

On opening day at the Rainy River District School Board, 1,701 elementary students and 1,330 secondary students arrived. This is nine more elementary students and fourteen less secondary students than projected. In comparison with 2003/2004, enrollment has decreased by 74 elementary students and 169 secondary students.

The Rainy River District School Board operates fourteen schools located throughout a geographic area that extends from Rainy River to Atikokan along the shores of the river.